

The Point Of No Return No. 166

Introduction.

I. During World War II the men of the Air Force made popular a frightening phrase, “The Point of No Return.” It designated the spot in space in which the fuel supply of their aircraft would be half depleted. If trouble developed, a decision to terminate the mission and return to the home base would have to be made before passing the point of no return.

II. There is a spiritual point of no return.

A. Jesus said that some in His day had reached the point “they could not believe.” (Jn. 12:39).

B. The Hebrew writer affirms. (Heb. 6:4-6).

4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

1. This terrifying passage begins with a list of the privileges of the Christian life, but it ends with the shocking word “impossible.”

2. It does not say it is impossible for God to forgive or that God will refuse to forgive the penitent person, but that it is impossible to renew some to repentance. They have reached the point where they are not moved by God’s goodness. They have no desire or power to repent and come to God.. **They have reached the point of no return.**

III. The question naturally arise in our minds, “**How does a person reach the point of no return.**” There are at least 4 ways a person can reach this frightening point.

I. **Breaking God’s Moral Laws** - The point of no return can be reached by breaking God’s moral laws.

A. It is serious to break God’s moral laws. Sins hurts, it enslaves us, and it hardens our hearts to the point that they cannot repent.

1. During an **evangelistic meeting in San Diego**, a man came to talk to the visiting preacher about his life. He had been reared in a Christian home but had taken a wrong turn and ended up in the clutches of whiskey. For 25 years he had been enslaved, sacrificing his family, professional reputation and personal dignity. He exclaimed to the preacher, “I am now completely sober, and I’m never going to drink again. I’m going to start anew with God!” He revealed his plans to answer the invitation of Christ, and requested permission to make his own oral public confession. They parted after praying together and the visiting preacher rushed to share the good news with the local preacher. He enthusiasm was deflated by the preacher’s reply: “I’m very glad that he is coming, but I should tell you that it will be the third time this year.” The following night the penitent alcoholic came and made a confession so moving that nearly everyone shed tears. He left the building in the arms of his family and friends. **Two nights later the**

visiting preacher learned a lesson about the point of no return. He met the man in front of the church prior to the service. The man was drunk, his handshake was unsteady and he refused to look the preacher in the eyes. He had become so enslaved to the drink that he had reached the point of no return.

2. Yes, men can reach the point of no return by becoming enslaved to strong drink. Men can also reach the point of no return by becoming enslaved to gambling, money, lust, power. Sin has tremendous power and should never be considered lightly. It will enslave and destroy.

B. The Hebrew writer said. (Heb. 3:12, 13).

1. The same writer goes on to affirm that sin's hardening powers can leave the sinner unable "to discern between good and evil." (Heb. 5:14).
2. Paul wrote that the moral decay of ancient Rome had caused men to become "**vain in their reasonings**, and their **senseless heart** was darkened."
 - a. Then in three sledgehammer phrases he declared that "God gave them up to **uncleanness**, **vile passions**, and a **reprobate mind**."
 - b. Listen to what Paul says. (Rom. 1:18-32).

18 ¶ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. 24 ¶ Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 ¶ For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. 28 ¶ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with

all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ROM 1:30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ROM 1:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

- c. When a man reaches the point that God's gives him up, he has reached the point of no return.
- d. **Everyone who practices sin is in danger of reaching the point of no return.** No one ever intended to reach this point, but millions have reached it by scorning and ignoring God's moral laws.

II. **Nominal Christian** - The point of no return can be reached by being a nominal Christian.

A. **One of the world's greatest serpentariums is located in Miami, Florida.** Some years ago the scientist who directs it was bitten by one of the largest snakes ever brought into North America. He was rushed to the hospital where his friends expected him to die. But he did not die. He miraculously recovered. The only medical explanation was that in the course of his work at the serpentarium he had been bitten so many times, by less deadly snakes, that he had built up an immunity against the bite of the king cobra.

B. I fear that some Christians have built up an immunity to Christianity.

- 1. Some have listened to sermons so long without acting that they have lost their capacity to be disturbed and excited about Christianity.
- 2. It would seem no power on earth could cause them to attend more than one service each week; to give as they have been prospered; to lose themselves in the service of God.
- 3. Some church members have carried on such a lengthy flirtation with Christ that they have lost the capacity to really fall in love with Him.

C. **One had better not take Christ at all unless he intends to take Him seriously.**

- 1. **Continual lukewarmness** saps all of the excitement from Christianity and makes the heart insensitive.
- 2. Continual lukewarmness makes Christ sick. (Rev. 3:15, 16).

III. **Falling Away** - The point of no return can be reached by falling away.

A. The passage we read from Hebrews, in the beginning of our lesson, was describing a Christian who has fallen away.

- 1. The Hebrew writer said that one could be enlightened, taste of the heavenly gift, partake of the Holy Spirit, taste the good word of God and the powers of the age to come and still fall away.
- 2. He said it was possible for them to so fall in some cases that it was impossible to renew them to repentance.

B. This should make us more diligent in our attempts to stay close to God.

1. We stay close to God by praying, reading His word, worshiping and serving Him every day.
2. It is serious to drift away from God. It is so easy to drift. It takes no effort at all. The person who continues to drift will find it harder and harder to repent and be touched again by God's goodness. He will eventually find it impossible to repent.
3. Instead of repenting he loses the desire to repent. He grows hardened and his last state becomes worse than the first. (2 Pet. 2:20).

IV. Delay - The point of no return can be reached by delay.

A. Early in life a person is nearly always receptive to the gospel.

1. But every sin committed, every sermon rejected, every appeal denied, every invitation evaded leaves the heart more hardened.
2. It is spiritual suicide to the gospel lightly and delay coming to Christ.
3. This is why the Hebrew writer said. (Heb. 4:7).

B. Solomon said. (Eccles. 12:1).

1. It is tragic that many have delayed until "the evil days". They now have lost all desire to come to Christ.
2. They are content to remain in sin. They are content to remain in the kingdom of darkness and doom.

Conclusion.

- I. Beloved, the point of no return is not a fairy tale. It is real and millions have reached it and millions of others are swiftly moving toward it.
- II. Don't reach the point of no return!
 - A. Change directions! Draw near to God and live every day for Him! No one drawing near to God will reach the point of no return.
 - B. If you are out of Christ, come to Him now. Today you can change, today you can repent, but tomorrow it may be so hardened by the deceitfulness of sin that it cannot repent. Submit to Christ now. Be buried with Him in baptism and arise to live for Him. Come as we stand and sin.

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